I. Listing of Claims

CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A steering wheel comprising a frame and an outer skin that at least partially covers the frame, the frame to be connected to a steering shaft~~, the frame~~ and having radially outwardly extending spokes and a rim, the frame defining a recess to receive an air-bag unit, the steering wheel being provided with a plurality of mounting elements, each of the mounting elements being associated with a respective spoke, each of the mounting elements being connected to the steering wheel and having a ~~portion~~ flange that lies over top of ~~an external part~~ the outer skin of the steering wheel exposing the flange of each of the mounting elements to outside the steering wheel, each of the mounting elements being adjacent a periphery of the air-bag unit; the air-bag unit being connected to each of the mounting elements by means of a respective resiliently biased connection to enable relative movement of the air-bag unit with respect to the steering wheel, the periphery of the air-bag unit defining a substantially ~~predetermined~~ controlled gap with ~~a portion~~ the flange of each of the mounting elements.

2. (Previously Presented) A steering wheel according to Claim 1 wherein at least one of the resiliently biased connections between the air-bag unit and one of the mounting elements of the steering wheel includes electric contacts configured to be moved to touch each other on movement of the air-bag unit against the bias of the resiliently biased connection to complete a horn or hooter circuit.

3. (Previously Presented) A steering wheel according to Claim 1 wherein at least one of the resiliently biased connections comprises a compressible helical spring.

4. (Previously Presented) A steering wheel according to Claim 3 wherein the upper part of the spring is connected to an element which is received within a snap-fit socket provided on a projecting peripheral lip of the air-bag unit.

5. (Currently Amended) A steering wheel according to Claim 1 wherein at least one of the mounting elements are mounted to the steering wheel with a degree of freedom of movement, wherein the movement of the mounting element causing the ~~portion~~ flange of the mounting element that lies over top of the ~~external part~~ outer skin of the steering wheel to slide relative to the steering wheel.

6. (Currently Amended) A steering wheel comprising a frame to be connected to a steering shaft, the frame having radially outwardly extending spokes and a rim, the frame defining a recess to receive an air-bag unit, the steering wheel being provided with a plurality of mounting elements, each of the mounting elements being associated with a respective spoke, each of the mounting elements being connected to the steering wheel and having a portion that lies over top of an external part of the steering wheel, each of the

mounting elements being adjacent a periphery of the air-bag unit; the air-bag unit being connected to each of the mounting elements by means of a respective resiliently biased connection to enable relative movement of the air-bag unit with respect to the steering wheel, the periphery of the air-bag unit defining a substantially predetermined gap with the portion of each of the mounting elements, wherein at least one of the mounting elements are mounted to the steering wheel with a degree of freedom of movement, the movement of the mounting element causing the portion of the mounting element that lies over top of the external part of the steering wheel to slide relative to the steering wheel, and ~~according to Claim 5~~ wherein there are three of the mounting elements, one of the mounting elements being mounted to the steering wheel at a predetermined position without the degree of freedom of movement, and the remaining two of the mounting elements being mounted to the steering wheel with the degree of freedom of movement.

7. (Currently Amended) A steering wheel comprising a frame to be connected to a steering shaft, the frame having radially outwardly extending spokes and a rim, the frame defining a recess to receive an air-bag unit, the steering wheel being provided with a plurality of mounting elements, each of the mounting elements being associated with a respective spoke, each of the mounting elements being connected to the steering wheel and having a portion that lies over top of an external part of the steering wheel, each of the mounting elements being adjacent a periphery of the air-bag unit; the air-bag unit being connected to each of the mounting elements by means of a

respective resiliently biased connection to enable relative movement of the air-bag unit with respect to the steering wheel, the periphery of the air-bag unit defining a substantially predetermined gap with the portion of each of the mounting elements, wherein at least one of the mounting elements are mounted to the steering wheel with a degree of freedom of movement, the movement of the mounting element causing the portion of the mounting element that lies over top of the external part of the steering wheel to slide relative to the steering wheel, and ~~according to Claim 5~~ wherein the steering wheel defines mounting platforms and respective retaining recesses, each of the mounting elements having a horizontal bias to a respective mounting platform and having depending snap acting elements receivable within the corresponding recess, at least some of the recesses having dimensions greater than that of the snap acting elements to provide the degree of freedom of movement.

8. (Previously Presented) A steering wheel according to Claim 7 wherein each of the recesses is provided within the respective platform.

9. (Previously Presented) A steering wheel according to Claim 7 wherein each of the recesses is provided at a position adjacent the respective platform.

10. (Previously Presented) A steering wheel according to Claim 7 wherein each of the platforms is located beneath a peripheral lip provided on

the air-bag unit, the portion of the mounting element that lies over top of the external part of the steering wheel being in the form of a flange, the gap being defined between the peripheral lip and the flange.